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ABSTRACT

Questionnaires were sent out to the 188 city and county systems which comprise the Georgia Public School System concerning the status of psychology in each system. The original mailing plus two follow-up mailings resulted in replies from 89 percent of the state's school systems. The questionnaires yielded information concerning the following: 1) whether or not psychology courses are offered; b) credentials of those employed as psychology instructors; c) number of courses offered; and d) texts currently in use. The survey results suggested that instruction of psychology in the public schools of Georgia is not approached in a systematic fashion. (Author)

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Abstract

Questionnaires were sent out to the 188 city and county school systems which comprise the Georgia Public School System concerning the status of psychology in each system. The original mailing plus two follow-up mailings resulted in replies from 89 percent of the state's school systems. The questionnaires yielded information concerning: (a) whether or not psychology courses are offered; (b) credentials of those employed as psychology instructors; (c) number of courses offered; and (d) texts currently in use. The survey results suggested that instruction of psychology in the public schools of Georgia is not approached in a systematic fashion.

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The Status of Psychology in Georgia Public Schools[1]

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During the period from July of 1972 until February of 1973, questionnaires were submitted to 28 city and 160 county school systems throughout the state of Georgia in order to determine the status of psychology in the curricula of Georgia's public schools. To date, the orginal plus two follow-up questionnaires have elicited response from 167 of these school systems (approx. 89%).

These questionnaires have yielded a number of interesting facts concerning the teaching of psychology in Georgia public schools. To begin with, it is noteworthy that none of the 167 school systems offers psychology courses at the elementary level and only one reports such courses taught at the junior high level. The picture is not this bleak at the senior high level, i.e., fifty-nine of the 167 responding systems (approx. 35%) offer psychology courses in at least one of their schools.

The questionniares also yielded information about the credentials of those teachers who are currently acting as psychology instructors in the various school systems. Twenty-five of the systems offering psychology (approx. 42%) state that one or more of their teachers hold the T-4 certificate in Behavioral Science[2]. Thirteen systems state that one of their teachers holds the B.A. or B.S. in psychology (approx. 22%); four systems state that one of their teachers holds the M.A. or M.S. in psychology (approx. 7%); four systems state that their psychology teachers possess "other" (social science or social studies) credentials (approx. 7%); none of the systems reports teachers who hold doctoral degrees; fifteen systems failed to supply teacher-

credential information (approx. 25%). This latter finding may mean that a number of persons with little or no background in the field are serving as psychology instructors.

The questionnaires also provided information concerning the number of psychology courses offered by those systems which teach psychology. The number of such courses varies considerably from system to system, i.e., from one to seven with a mean of approximately 1.6 courses (median = 1.0). Table 1 summarizes the systems currently offering psychology courses, including the number of courses offered and credentials of those persons serving as instructors. Finally, it is also interesting to note that of those systems reporting the names of their psychology texts (approx. 78%). 52% mention Psychology for Living (McGraw-Hill), 10% list Psychology: It's Principles and Applications (Harcourt), and 6% mention Psychology: The Science of Behavior (Springer). The remaining 32% list various other materials.

The results of this survey suggest that the teaching of psychology in Georgia's public schools is approached in somewhat of a casual and non-systematic manner. Although the State of Georgia appears to be moving in the appropriate direction with its provision for a T-4 certificate in psychology, it is difficult to believe that only a third of the school systems in the state currently offer any psychology courses at all! Rather, one might expect to encounter increasing concern with such studies and to find the teaching of psychology assuming equal importance to topics subsumed under some of the more ubiquitous areas, say, civics or geography. Furthermore, it seems reasonable to project that, in an adequately conceptualized program, the instruction of psychology might be featured in the curricula at different academic levels. For example, behavioral science contributions could be introduced at the elementary level. In any case, it

appears obvious to us that some sort of systematic plan should be devised in order to introduce students to psychology at all educational levels within the public school systems of Georgia. We suspect that our findings concerning the approach to the instruction of psychology in Georgia's public schools may also be representative of other states as well.

Footnotes

1 This survey was undertaken as part of the effort of the Georgia Psychological Association Liaison Committee to the State Department of Education of which Q.R. Jones is a member and F.M. Berry is chairman and, also, as part of F.M. Berry's effort as GPA's liaison to APA's Committee on Precollege Psychology.

2 The requirements for the T-4 certificate as given by the State Board of Education are: "(a) 60 quarter hours in sociology, pyschology, and anthropology with a minimum of 40 quarter hours in one area of concentration and 10 quarter hours in each of the other two behavioral sciences; (b) 30 quarter hours which must include a minimum of 10 hours in each of the following areas: Foundations of education... Curriculum and Methods...Secondary Student Teaching or on approval a substitute."

Table 1

Public School Systems Offering Psychology Courses

County System	No. Courses	No. Teachers
Berrien	1	1[a]
Bibb	3	3[a]
Brantley	1	1[a]
Brooks	1	NR
Camden	1	1[a]
Carroll	4	4[d]
Catoosa	NR	2[a]
Chatham	7	1[b]
Chattooga	4	2[a]
Cherokee	1	1[c]
Clark	2	2[a]
Cobb	1	9[d]
Columbia	NR	2[d]
Coweta	1	1[a]
Crawford	1	1[a]
Dawson	1	1[a]
Dooly	1	1[a]
Dougherty	1	4[a],1[b]

County System	No. Courses	No. Teachers
Lumpkin	1	NR
Morgan	1	1[b]
Oglethorpe	1	1[b]
Paulding	1	1[a]
Polk	1	1[a]
Putnam	1	NR
Richmond	7	5[a],1[b],1[c]
Rockdale	1	1[a]
Stewart	1	NR
Stephens	2	1[b],1[c]
Terrell	1	1[a]
Thomas	1	1[d]
Union	1	1[a]
Walker	2	1[b]
Wayne	1	1[c]
Wilcox	1	NR
Wilker	1	NR
Worth	1	NR

Table 1 cont'd.

County			City		
System	No. Courses	No. Teachers	Systems	No. Courses	No. Teachers
Fayette	1	1[d]	Atlanta	2	2[b]
Forsyth	1	1[b]	Calhoun	1	NR
Glynn	2	NR	Chikamauga	1	1[b]
Grady	1	1[a]	Cochran	1	1[d]
Gwinnett	7	NR	Decatur	1	1[a]
Hall	4	NR	Dublin	1	NR
Heard	1	1[a]	Gainesville	2	NR
Henry	2	2[a]	La Grange	1	1[a], 1[b]
Houston	3	NR	Thomaston	1	1[b]
Irwin	1	1[a]	Thomasville	1	1[a]
Jones	1	1[b]	Trion	1	NR
Lowndes*	3	2[d]			

[a] T-4 certificate

[b] B.A. or B.S. in psychology

[c] M.A. or M.S. in psychology

[d] Other

NR No response to this item

* Courses offered in Junior High only